

HENDRY COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

Code of Ethics



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Code of Conduct

All members of the agency, whether sworn or non-sworn, are responsible for holding themselves to a high standard in their private and professional lives. The Hendry County Sheriff's Office is committed to creating a quality workplace where all employees are valued and all citizens of the community are provided equal and quality service. Diversity awareness, to help us acknowledge, accept and actively support a culturally diverse work environment which values, respects and uses differences to improve the quality of work life and service to the public.

Code of Ethics

The Office of Sheriff has long stood for the safety and protection of the citizens it serves. The public rightfully, can expect professional and courteous service when it so demands. The image the members of the Office present, both during working hours and non-scheduled hours, serves as a tool for the public to measure the level of professionalism of the Office. Therefore, it is incumbent upon **all members** of the Sheriff's Office to guard their actions cautiously and for all certified law enforcement members to abide by the following code of ethics.

As a law enforcement officer, my fundamental duty is to serve mankind; to safeguard lives and property; to protect the innocent against deception, the weak against oppression or intimidation, and the peaceful against violence or disorder; and to respect the constitutional rights of all men to liberty, equality and justice. I will keep my private life unsullied as an example to all; maintain courageous calm in the face of dangers, scorn or ridicule; develop self-restraint; and be constantly mindful of the welfare of others. Honest in thought and deed in both my personal and official life, I will be exemplary in obeying the laws of the land and the regulations of my department. Whatever I see or hear of a confidential nature or that is confided to me in my official capacity will be kept ever secret unless revelation is necessary in the performance of my duty. I will never act officiously or permit personal feelings, prejudice, animosities or friendships to influence my decisions. With no compromise for crime and with relentless prosecution of criminals, I will enforce the law courteously and appropriately without fear or favor, malice or ill will, never employing unnecessary force or violence, and never accepting gratuities. I recognize the badge of my office as a symbol of public faith, and I accept it as a public trust to be held so long as I am true to the ethics. I will constantly strive to achieve these objectives and ideals, dedicating myself to my chosen profession; law enforcement.

Primary Responsibility

All members are expected to have knowledge of and comply with all department directives, general orders, special orders, standard operating procedures relevant to their respective duties, and any additional procedures established by authorized individuals. Members are expected to have knowledge of and comply with the policies and procedures contained with the Hendry County Sheriff's Office.

A law enforcement officer acts as an official representative of government who is required and trusted to work within the law. The officer's powers and duties are conferred by statute. The fundamental duties of a police officer include serving the community; safeguarding lives and

property; protecting the innocent; keeping the peace; and ensuring the rights of all to liberty; equality and justice.

Members shall maintain sufficient mental and physical competency to properly perform their duties and assume the responsibilities of their positions. Members shall perform their duties in a manner that will maintain the highest standards of efficiency in carrying out their duties and the lawful objectives of the department.

Performance of the Duties

Members shall execute all assigned job duties, tasks and responsibilities in a thorough and complete manner. Members shall take any official action required by federal or state law, by county ordinance or by any directive of the Sheriff. Members will be approachable and responsive to all persons in need of assistance.

A law enforcement officer shall perform all duties impartially, without favor of affection or ill will and without regard to status, sex, race, religion, political belief or aspiration. All citizens will be treated equally with courtesy, consideration and dignity.

Laws will never allow personal feelings, animosities or friendships to influence official conduct. Laws will be enforced appropriately and courteously and, in carrying out their responsibilities, officers will strive to obtain maximum cooperation from the public. They will conduct themselves in appearance and deportment in such a manner as to inspire confidence and respect for the position of public trust they hold.

While on duty, members shall not engage in any activities or personal business that would cause them to neglect or be inattentive to their assigned responsibilities. Members shall remain awake, alert and attentive while on duty. If unable to do so, they shall report to their supervisor, who shall determine the proper course of action.

Members shall report for duty at the time and place required by assignment and be physically and mentally fit to perform their duties. Agency sanctioned extra-duty assignments, training sessions, and legally issued subpoenas shall constitute an order to report for duty under this section.

Discretion

A law enforcement officer will use responsibly, the discretion vested in the position and exercise it within the law. The principle of reasonableness will guide the officer's determinations and the officer will consider all surrounding circumstances in determining whether any legal action shall be taken.

Consistent and wise use of discretion, based on professional policing competence, will do much to preserve good relationships and retain the confidence of the public. There can be difficulty in choosing between conflicting courses of action. It is important to remember that a timely word of advice rather than arrest – which may be correct in appropriate circumstances – can be a more effective means of achieving a desired end.

Use of Force

A law enforcement officer will never employ unnecessary force or violence and will use only such force in the discharge of duty as is reasonable in all circumstances.

Force should be used only with the greatest restraint and only after discussion, negotiation and persuasion have been found to be inappropriate or ineffective. While the use of force is occasionally unavoidable, every law enforcement officer will refrain from applying the unnecessary infliction of pain or suffering and will never engage in cruel, degrading or inhuman treatment of any person.

Confidentiality

Whatever a law enforcement officer sees, hears or learns of, which is of a confidential nature will be kept secret unless the performance of duty or legal provision requires otherwise. Members of the public have a right to security and privacy, and information obtained about them must not be improperly divulged.

Integrity

A law enforcement officer will not engage in acts of corruption or bribery, nor will an officer condone such acts by other law enforcement officers.

The public demands that the integrity of police officers be above reproach. Law enforcement officers must, therefore, avoid any conduct that might compromise integrity and thus undercut the public confidence in a law enforcement agency. Officers will refuse to accept any gifts, presents, subscriptions, favors, gratuities or promises that could be interpreted as seeking to cause the officer to refrain from performing official responsibilities honestly and within the law. Law enforcement officers must not receive private or special advantage from their official status. Respect from the public cannot be bought; it can only be earned and cultivated.

Cooperation with other Officers and Agencies

Law enforcement officers will cooperate with all legally authorized agencies and their representatives in the pursuit of justice.

An officer or agency may be one among many organizations that may provide law enforcement services to a jurisdiction. It is imperative that an Officer assist colleagues fully and completely with respect and consideration at all times.

Personal/Professional Capabilities

Law enforcement officers will be responsible for their own standard of professional performance and will take every reasonable opportunity to enhance and improve their level of knowledge and competence.

Through study and experience, a law enforcement officer can acquire the high level of knowledge and competence that is essential for the efficient and effective performance of duty.

The acquisition of knowledge is a never-ending process of personal and professional development that should be pursued constantly.

Private Life

Law enforcement officers will act in a manner that does not bring discredit to their agencies or themselves.

A law enforcement officer's character and conduct while off duty must always be exemplary, thus maintaining a position of respect in the community in which he or she lives and serves. The officer's personal behavior must be beyond reproach.